It was hard on him that he should have been called upon to be the supreme ruler of a gigantic country in the most terrible days that ever befell it. Moreover, Mr. Churchill's phrase is not an exhaustive, and, in one respect, not an accurate, description of the Czar's qualities in action. "Merciful disposition" is not strictly applicable at all times to the character of his dealings with some of the worthiest of his subjects. There are incidents in his reign for which he was directly and personally responsible, which will always cast a doubt upon his possession of the quality of mercy. The bloodstained squares of Petrograd, the howling wastes of Siberia, bore witness to other and more merciless attributes. The horror of his end tempers criticism. But if it is to remain silent it must not be provoked by truculent challenge.*

Had there been no Revolution or had it been postponed, Russia could only have just pulled through by the active intervention of her Allies *Russia's* in formulating and carrying through a *internal chaos* complete programme of reconstruction.

Nothing else could have saved the Empire from the chaos and muddle in which it had been landed by its ruler and his minions. The Allies could not have accomplished this object had the most

* Princess Radziwill in her book, "Nicholas II, last of the Czars," says (p. 197) :—

"I will here say something that may surprise my readers. I feel

convinced the hatred for Rasputin which was openly expressed in the best society of Petersburg and Moscow, was but a blind to hide a campaign for the overthrow of the Emperor himself! A plausible pretext was essential, but the more serious aim was cherished by a considerable number of those sick of the graft, corruption and complete disorder of the administration, and disgusted with the shallow, false and unreliable character of Nicholas II, and the cold-blooded cruelty with which he was trying to suppress every aspiration and movement towards reform. The torrents of blood shed since he ascended the Throne had alienated all respect and affection, and his subjects had come to look upon him as an impediment to the development and the prosperity of Russia."